

# \$1.5 MILLION IN RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED FOR 2017 – 2018 ACADEMIC YEAR

APDA is pleased to announce that \$1.5 million in research grant funding has been awarded to support cutting-edge Parkinson's disease (PD) research via four Post-Doctoral Fellowships, 11 Research Grants, and eight APDA Centers of Advanced Research as part of its 2017-2018 funding cycle.

The grants are awarded through a competitive application process and reviewed by APDA's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) which is comprised of scientists with a wide array of backgrounds and expertise in all areas relevant to PD research. The SAB meets annually to review all grant proposals and set the scientific direction of APDA's annual research investment. Their focus is to identify researchers early in their careers and attract them to the PD field, as well as help established investigators pursue new and novel ideas. In many cases these projects produce significant pilot data, which has enabled researchers to apply for and receive multimillion dollar research grants from the National Institutes of Health and other funding institutions.

*"There is an urgent need to accelerate research and support translational ideas that have the potential to truly improve the quality of life for people living with PD,"* commented David G. Standaert, MD, PhD, John N. Whitaker Professor, Chair of Neurology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and Chairman of the SAB. *"Now is a time of tremendous excitement in Parkinson's research. The objective of the SAB is to invest in the best science that will move the field forward, to slow or cure the disease."*

APDA has been a funding partner in many of the significant Parkinson's scientific discoveries in the last 50 years including the work of Dr. George C. Cotzias, which led to establishing the effectiveness of levodopa in treating PD; this treatment remains the gold standard in PD treatment today.

*"The work being done as a result of the grants in this new funding cycle will have an incredible impact on the world of PD,"* stated Leslie A. Chambers, President & CEO of APDA. *"We are truly excited about the range of projects we are able to support, from neuroprotection that can slow the progress of the disease, to biomarkers which can help measure the activity of the disease, to novel ideas such as wearables and evidence-based non-medical*

*therapies that can help improve quality of life. The questions posed by our researchers span a broad and exciting range of areas. This work is only possible because of the steadfast support of our generous APDA donors."*

**Learn more about these grantees and the exciting work they are doing and browse all APDA-funded research by visiting [www.apdaparkinson.org/research/what-we-fund/](http://www.apdaparkinson.org/research/what-we-fund/).**



APDA Scientific Advisory Board: (Back row L-R) Clemens R. Scherzer, MD, Harvard Medical School and Brigham & Women's Hospital; Un Jung Kang, MD, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons; Evan Yale Snyder, MD, PhD, The Burnham Institute; Joel S. Perlmutter, MD, Washington University School of Medicine; Dennis W. Dickson, MD, Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville; Richard Myers, PhD, Boston University School of Medicine. (Front row L-R); Marie H el ene Saint-Hilaire, MD, FRCP (C), Boston University School of Medicine; Leslie A. Chambers, President & CEO, APDA; David G. Standaert, MD, PhD, Chairman of the APDA SAB, University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Medicine; Mahlon R. DeLong, MD, Emory University School of Medicine. (Not pictured); Marie-Francoise Chesselet, MD, PhD, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA; J. Timothy Greenamyre, MD, PhD, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center; Laura Marsh, MD, Michael E. DeBakey, University of Virginia Health System; Mary Maral Mouradian, MD, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.



A message from  
President & CEO,  
Leslie A. Chambers

Dear Friend,

Every autumn, as the academic year begins, I'm reminded that the PD community has so much to be hopeful about. This season marks the start of a new research grant cycle, bringing along with it the potential for better PD treatments.

That's why I'm so pleased to congratulate the four Post-Doctoral Fellows and 11 APDA Research Grant recipients for the 2017-2018 academic year. These bright scientists were selected through a rigorous, competitive application process to ensure that APDA funds the best scientific opportunities, and we feel confident that they will lead the way to a more promising future for people living with PD.

We also have some very exciting developments for those seeking information and support. In collaboration with Smart Patients, APDA has created an online community where families living with PD can interact. And, we will soon host our first West Coast Parkinson's Educational Forum, which will give people with PD and their care partners an opportunity to learn and connect. We hope to see you there.

We are so glad to have friends like you by our side, who make all of this possible. Together, we will keep discovering new ways to help everyone impacted by PD live life to the fullest!

Sincerely,

Leslie A. Chambers  
President & CEO  
American Parkinson Disease Association

## APDA GRANTEES INVESTIGATE NEW PD TREATMENT OPTION

Alice Cronin-Golomb, PhD, at the Boston University School of Medicine, one of the 15 APDA grant recipients for the 2017-2018 academic year, is leading a team of investigators to create solutions for people with PD. Their objective is to develop a low-cost treatment to improve cognitive and gait function without causing negative side effects.



Alice Cronin-Golomb, PhD, recipient of an APDA grant

The inspiration for this study came when Dr. Cronin-Golomb was talking to Joseph DeGutis, PhD, about an attentional training program he was conducting in patients with cognitive impairment. The program was particularly effective for people with hemispatial neglect — that is, people with impairments on the left side of the body that reflect dysfunction in the right side of the brain.

Since PD starts on one side of the brain, they wondered if this program model could help people with PD — particularly those whose onset was on the left side of the body. To their surprise, their initial tests indicated that the attentional training worked across the board, regardless of what side the participants' symptoms started on. They plan to expand on this exciting finding with APDA's support.



Joseph DeGutis, PhD, recipient of an APDA grant

Their APDA grant will be used to fund a cognitive training intervention study aimed at improving motor and non-motor functions. The study entails 30-minute sessions of in-home training over the course of four weeks that target core cognitive operations.

*"Donations are what makes it possible to pull new researchers into the field of PD. Their varieties of expertise and insights will help us think outside the box, and that's what's going to push this field forward"* says Dr. Alice Cronin-Golomb.

The initial results of Dr. Cronin-Golomb's study are very promising and we are confident her team's collaborative work will lead us to a better understanding of PD and how to treat it.

Thank you for supporting important research projects like these, which have great potential to improve the quality of life for people impacted by PD.

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## on: UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH MEDICAL CENTER

APDA funds eight Centers for Advanced Research across the country, which facilitate investigations into the causes, treatments, and ultimately, a cure for PD. One of these centers is located at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, where APDA funding supports:

- Fellowship program in movement disorders
- MRI-guided Deep Brain Stimulation
- Non-motor symptoms study
- Therapeutic alpha-synuclein knockdown study
- 1,000 patient visits per year



J. Timothy Greenamyre, MD, PhD, Medical Director of APDA Center for Advanced Research at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

### Dr. Greenamyre leads team to new therapies

J. Timothy Greenamyre, MD, PhD, and his team at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center have discovered a major reason that a Parkinson's-related protein is toxic to neurons in the brain. This finding has the potential to lead to new therapies that could slow or stop the progression of this disease.

*"I've been involved in Parkinson's research for more than 25 years and the further I go along, the more urgency I feel to translate what we're doing in the laboratory into something that's going to make a meaningful difference for people affected by Parkinson's disease."*

— Dr. Greenamyre

Your gift helps APDA provide scientists with the resources they need to gain insights and make crucial discoveries. Thank you for keeping these Centers for Advanced Research at the forefront of cutting-edge PD research!

## New programs offer support for people impacted by PD

APDA is invested in providing outstanding support and care services for the PD community. That's why we're launching new programs that will give more efficient and effective help to those who need it most.

### Smart Patients: An online community

In collaboration with Smart Patients, APDA has launched an online support forum, through which people with PD and their families can interact in a safe, supportive environment from the convenience of their own homes. This network extends APDA's resources to help those affected by PD, no matter where they are located, at no cost to participants.

*"We are proud to work with APDA to connect people with Parkinson's with one another,"* says Roni Zeiger, MD, CEO of Smart Patients. *"Community can provide peace of mind through social and emotional support, not to mention those practical tips patients and families learn through direct experience."*

Learn more at [smartpatients.com/apda](http://smartpatients.com/apda).

### APDA's New Program to "PRESS" Forward with Support/Information

Parkinson's Roadmap for Education and Support Services (PRESS) is an eight week in-person support series in key cities across the country with tailored content to address the psychosocial needs of those who have been diagnosed within the last five years. Each PRESS support group is facilitated by a trained healthcare professional and will provide a structured platform for people to share their experiences, feelings, and strategies for coping with the disease.

*"We saw a need for a more specific support program, especially for those who are just starting to navigate the world of Parkinson's,"* says Leslie Chambers, President & CEO of APDA. *"High quality education and support are critical to a successful PD journey."*

To learn more about PRESS or to register for a group near you, contact Emily Ciorciari at [eciorciari@apdaparkinson.org](mailto:eciorciari@apdaparkinson.org) or call **(800) 223-2732**.

PRESS

Parkinson's Roadmap for  
Education and  
Support Services



# Ask the Doctor

**Q&A with Marie H el ene Saint-Hilaire, MD, FRCP (C), Boston University School of Medicine**

**Q.** My uncle is 57 and has advanced PD. He cannot live alone because he is no longer able to speak intelligibly, is not eating and is not seeing his doctors. I'm looking to move him nearer to where I live. Is there something you could recommend?

**A.** It is helpful for caregivers to talk with a social worker or case manager to help determine what support is needed. "Aging life care specialists" can help you navigate this process — you can find more information about this at [www.aginglifecare.org](http://www.aginglifecare.org). APDA also provides information to assist family members in finding local resources. Learn more at [apdaparkinson.org/local-resources](http://apdaparkinson.org/local-resources).

**Q.** Are vivid dreams that come on every night a sign of late stage PD, or is it because Sinemet was increased by   tablet at 6am and 6pm?

**A.** Vivid dreams can occur at any time during the disease condition — even before diagnosis. They also can occur as a side effect of an increase of medication. It's important to get information about the dreams because some people with PD have a condition called REM Behavior Disorder, which might need to be treated. It is also important to know if they are having visual hallucinations during the day, which are usually a side effect of medication. Be sure to discuss the vivid dreams with your doctor.

## FUNDRAISERS WALK TO MAKE AN IMPACT

APDA's Optimism Walks bring friends and families together in support of those living with Parkinson's, mobilizing communities to put an end to this disease, together. See how some participants have gone above and beyond in their fundraising efforts.



Steve participating in the Optimism Walk

**Team: Porter's Supporters**  
**Team Captain: Steve Porter**  
**Total raised: \$1,635**

When Steve Porter learned that he had PD, it felt like a devastating diagnosis

— but with the support of his wife and four children, he remains hopeful and optimistic. Through APDA, he finds ways to manage his symptoms, participate in clinical trials, and donate to support others like him.

*"Every donation matters — small, medium or large. They all go to the research and programs that directly affect the quality of life for someone with PD."*

— Steve Porter



Valerie (left) with her mother Suzie and their team

**Team: Team Suzie Ellis**  
**Team Captain: Valerie Ellis**  
**Total raised: \$2,090**

After her mother, Suzie, was diagnosed with

PD, Valerie became involved with APDA and has participated in many Optimism Walks over the years. As Suzie's symptoms progress, Valerie is more determined than ever to bring awareness to the disease.

*"I fundraise through Facebook and also through donations from the parents at the school where I teach. I am amazed at how many people have told me that their loved ones also have PD!"*

— Valerie Ellis

The Optimism Walk is APDA's signature fundraising event — are you ready to join the nationwide movement? Register for a walk near you or support a team at [apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks](http://apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks).



## What's happening at APDA



### Register today for our West Coast Parkinson's Educational Forum

APDA is hosting a special weekend of support, care, and discovery for people with PD and their care partners on October 28-29 in Anaheim, CA. To learn more or to register, please contact [apda@apdaparkinson.org](mailto:apda@apdaparkinson.org).



**WEST COAST PARKINSON'S EDUCATIONAL FORUM**  
A WEEKEND OF DISCOVERY

### Access newly published resources

APDA has recently revised and released two publications to guide people through their journey with PD. Visit [apdaparkinson.org/publications](http://apdaparkinson.org/publications) to find our *Parkinson's Disease Handbook* and *Be Active & Beyond*.

### Watch an educational webinar

Our webinar series covers a variety of subjects relevant to the PD community, at no cost to the public. Look out for upcoming webinars or watch an archived presentation at [apdaparkinson.org/webinar](http://apdaparkinson.org/webinar).

### Celebrate caregivers this November

November is Caregivers Awareness Month! Join APDA in celebrating those whose dedication to their loved ones with PD inspires strength and optimism every day.